

- 2024 -

STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS FOR NEBRASKA ANNUAL PUBLICATION



THE NEBRASKA CONNECTION

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Links Nebraska Communities



UNIVERSITY of NEBRASKA-LINCOLN



STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS FOR NEBRASKA 2024

We are pleased to present the 2024 edition of Strategic Discussions for Nebraska (SDN) in its new form titled -The Nebraska Connection: IANR Links Nebraska Communities. New this year, IANR stories are shared through SDN primarily on our website sdn.unl.edu, but we offer this booklet as a highlight reel. The design of this booklet is to share photos and key points from each story with the hope that readers then scan the QR code on page 8 to read the full stories. These stories share innovative work being done in IANR as well as highlight the people doing it. Specific topics include university disaster response options available for Nebraskans, current student experiences, CASNR alumni success stories, UNL judging team highlights, and agriculture education impacts on the state of Nebraska. We hope you enjoy our new design and read further on our website!



DR. LAURA E. YOUNG

SDN Director and Editor

Email: laura.young@unl.edu | sdn@unl.edu

Phone: 402.472.2807

STUDENT PROFILES



EMILY EILERS

Wayne, NE



KARLIE GERLACH

Wellfleet, NE



LANA HEBDA

Silver Creek, NE



ELIZABETH HODGES

Julian, NE



MADELINE HUWALDT

Osmond, NE



FAITH JUNCK

Carroll, NE

STUDENT PROFILES



KARLA NICHOLS

Miller, NE



SAMANTHA OBORNY

Garland, NE



KIAYA RADKE

Elba, NE



MALLERY SCHULTZ

Columbus, NE



PAIGE TRUMBLE

Platteville, CO



MICHELLE ZENK

Slayton, MN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 9 AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION**
How Agricultural Education Impacts Science Literacy in Nebraska
- 11 A BURNING ISSUE**
Wildfire Impact on Nebraska Agriculture
- 13 SEEDS WITH ROOTS**
Ag Educators Rooted in IANR Plant Seeds of Success in Nebraska's Youth

- 15 UNL JUDGING TEAMS**
Horse, Livestock, Meat and Soil

- 17 CASNR STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS**
Enriching Family Operations through College Education

- 19 CASNR ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS**
Pursuing Passion Leads to Career Success



**FOR FULL STORY ACCESS,
PLEASE VISIT [SDN.UNL.EDU](https://sdn.unl.edu)**

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

How Agricultural Education Impacts Science Literacy in Nebraska

By: Madeline Huwaldt

Literacy, of any kind, is a critical aspect of being a valuable member of society. Being able to understand agriculture and science topics allows people in Nebraska to communicate with others and be an informed voter when it comes to state decision-making.

CULTIVATED WISDOM

- 1 Being literate in agriculture or science allows for someone to communicate with others about topics in science and agriculture and be an informed voter.
- 2 Agricultural education was developed to teach and motivate students through an integrated model that includes classroom instruction, leadership development, and experimental learning.
- 3 Communities will become more informed as people step into their roles as educators.

For more information visit alec.unl.edu.





A BURNING ISSUE

Wildfire Impact on Nebraska Agriculture

By: Samantha Oborny, Karlie Gerlach and Michelle Zenk

Smoke rising from the horizon has been a common sight with the increase of wildfires across the Great Plains and the United States. With the right conditions in place, farmers and ranchers are facing a year-round wildfire season. Over 2.5 million acres of land were burned from 55,571 recorded wildfires through the U.S. in 2023.

“It was such a God thing that we didn’t lose the livestock.”

– Shaylee Jones, Diamond Bar Ranch



FLAMING FINDS

- 1 Wildfire season is becoming year-round across Nebraska from dry conditions.
- 2 The effects of the wildfires impact producers for months to come as next steps are taken to replace what was damaged.
- 3 After a wildfire, producers should give pastures time to recover by not grazing right away.
- 4 Assistance programs are available for producers impacted by wildfire.

For more information, visit disaster.unl.edu/wildfires

SEEDS WITH ROOTS

Ag Educators Rooted in IANR Plant Seeds of Success in Nebraska's Youth

By: Faith Junck and Emily Eilers

Agricultural education has and will continue to be an important aspect of the Nebraska education system. Between providing students with opportunities to explore career paths and challenging them to become leaders, 4-H and FFA programs, housed within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), work together to invest in today's youth and build a stronger future for the state of Nebraska.

"IANR's impact on agriculture is instrumental."

— Toni Rasmussen, Wayne FFA Advisor



4-H AND FFA IMPACTS

- 1 Agricultural educators build the future of agriculture in Nebraska daily by providing youth with opportunities to find their spark through 4-H and FFA programs.
- 2 IANR provides students with opportunities, resources, and support to create a passionate group of educators who continue to shape the future of agriculture through today's youth.
- 3 4-H and FFA provide spaces designed for youth to have the safety net to explore different areas of agriculture and STEM, discover what sparks their passions, and gain self-confidence.

For more information visit 4h.unl.edu and neaged.org.





UNL JUDGING TEAMS

Horse, Livestock, Meat and Soil

By: Elizabeth Hodges and Paige Trumble

Collegiate judging teams have a long-standing and prestigious history in many university systems. Here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is no different. No matter the competition, they are able to pull from classroom knowledge and industry experience to represent the university and ultimately bring back awards from these contests.

But these awards are not the only thing that students take from these contests. Being able to work in a team, become a better public speaker and build confidence are only a few of the skills students can transfer into their professional lives.

Due to the training from these judging contests like soil judging, meat judging, horse judging and livestock judging, these students are set up to make a difference in the agriculture industry.

JUDGING TEAM RESULTS

- 1 Students who participate in the horse judging team at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln gain self-confidence and the ability to overcome obstacles because of the intense time commitment, the incorporation of oral reasons, and the pressures of competition.
- 2 The meat judging team at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln prepares students for being informed consumers when purchasing meat because of the technical skills they gain.
- 3 Conversations with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln soil judging team, including coach Judy Turk, alumnus Sam Kortbein, and current participant Charlotte Brockman showcase how lifelong friendships are gained from time spent on the soil judging team.





CASNR STUDENTS

Enriching Family Operations through College Education

By: Lana Hebda and Mallery Schultz

CASNR STUDENT INSIGHTS

“It is good to fail, and that is 100% agriculture. You must fail to learn.”

- *Chaylee Tonniges*

“Take advantage of your time in college. Be diligent in what you learn, so that when you go home, you succeed.”

- *Grant Jones*

“God will never put anything on you that He does not think you can handle.”

- *Sam Skavdahl*



CASNR ALUMNI

Pursuing Passion Leads to Career Success

By: Karla Nichols and Kiaya Radke

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR), students are guided in the pursuit of their passions toward their future career paths. Recent CASNR alumni share personal stories and how they have stayed connected with the university.

“Get an internship in an area that you love”

— *Kristine Dvoracek-Jameson,
Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board*



ALUMNI ADVICE

“Taking the initiative and ask questions, even if you’re not entirely sure on how to do something. Put the extra time in to figure things out.”

— **Alec Weisser**
US Geological Survey

“Keep a very open mind when it comes to trying to figure out what to do after college. Taking time to go somewhere, learn something new, and get out of your comfort zone is very valuable for personal growth.”

— **Anna Kobza**
Doctoral Student

INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) focuses on people and the food, energy, water, natural resources, and communities that sustain them.

IANR scientific innovation in the land-grant mission areas of teaching, research, and Extension places Nebraska on the leading edge of food production, environmental stewardship, human nutrition, business development and youth engagement.

IANR comprises the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR), the Agricultural Research Division (ARD), Nebraska Extension, and the ARD and Extension components of three departments in the College of Education and Human Services.

The Nebraska Legislature created IANR in 1973 through the enactment of LB149. IANR is committed to growing the future of Nebraska's people, businesses, and communities.



CONNECTED

**THROUGH INNOVATION, STUDENTS,
AND COMMUNITIES, IANR KEEPS
NEBRASKANS CONNECTED.**

**FOR FULL STORY ACCESS,
VISIT [SDN.UNL.EDU](https://sdn.unl.edu)**





Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 830924
Lincoln, NE 68583-092

SDN.UNL.EDU